



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 17, 2005

U.S. Representative Christopher Cox
2402 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cox,

The Upper Newport Bay is one of the most beautiful ecological preserves of its kind in the country. It's a wonderful place where fresh water from the San Diego Creek blends with salt water from the Pacific Ocean that flows into Lower Newport Harbor and then into the Upper Newport Bay.

As one of the largest remaining tidal wetlands in Southern California, it is home to critical habitat for a variety of endangered species of birds and plants. However, the very thing that makes it so special, the flow of fresh water into the bay, also carries its principal threat, excessive upstream sediment. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the County of Orange have established the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Restoration project to remove the threat of this excessive sediment. This effort will ensure the long-term viability of this diverse salt marsh ecosystem.

Once completed, this plan will deepen two sediment basins in the upper bay by removing approximately 2.1 million cubic yards of sediment. This will include an ongoing maintenance dredging program that will ensure a long-term solution. In addition, the project will include enhancements to several existing habitat areas. The total project cost is approximately \$38.4 million. The federal government will pay approximately \$25 million for the project. The State of California has committed the entire sponsor share of \$13.4 million. Additional funds for ongoing maintenance will be contributed by the county and local governments.

A portion of the State's funds expire in 2006 and the remainder will expire in 2007. To avoid losing the State funds, construction must begin in spring 2005. To that end, \$13,000,000 needs to be allocated for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers '06 budget. This is a project that is very important to the State of California and I look forward to working with you to ensure that the environmental restoration of the Upper Newport Bay is completed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Arnold Schwarzenegger", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Arnold Schwarzenegger